

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 3233

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, MARR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: ROKG FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE

REF: A) STATE 09 7583; B) SEOUL 3111

SUMMARY: FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH KEY ROKG FIGURES INDICATES ROKG REACTING RAPIDLY IN WAKE OF WHO VOTE TO RECONSIDER ITS FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS. WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK THEY PROPOSE TO PRODUCE OUTLINE OF NEW INITIATIVES FOR DISCUSSION WITH US. THESE INVOLVE EXTENSIVE MODIFICATION OF TRADITIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARD NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND UN ORGANIZATIONS IN FAVOR OF A PRACTICAL TWO- KOREA POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON MAY 21 I HAD A LONG DISCUSSION WITH KIM CHONG- YOM, SECRETARY GENERAL TO PRESIDENT. KIM IS CLOSE TO PRESIDENT PARK AND REFLECTS HIS VIEWS FAITHFULLY. WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MY PREVIOUS CONVERSATION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER (REF B), I ASKED ABOUT PRESIDENT' S REACTION TO THE WHO VOTE AND TO RECENT ACCELERATION OF FOREIGN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA. KIM SAID THAT EVEN PRIOR TO WHO MEETING THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECOGNIZED THE NECESSITY TO MODIFY ITS PAST POLICY OF DIPLOMATIC CONTAINMENT OF NORTH KOREA. PRESIDENT PARK HAD

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INSTRUCTED HIS PRINCIPAL DIPLOMATIC ADVISORS TO CONSIDER WHAT NEW INITIATIVES COULD BE TAKEN. HE HAD HOPED A SUCCESSFUL VOTE FOR POSTPONEMENT OF NORTH KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN WHO WOULD CREATE A SITUATION IN WHICH ROKG COULD TAKE INITIATIVES TO CHANGE ITS POLICY ON THE BASIS OF A RECENT SUCCESS. DESPITE THE FAILURE AT WHO, THE REALITIES REMAINED UNCHANGED AND THE PLANNING WHICH THE PRESIDENT HAD INITIATED A SHORT WHILE AGO WOULD NOW BE ACCELERATED.

2. GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS STAFF, THE PRESIDENT HAD SET DOWN TWO GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THEIR GUIDANCE. FIRST, NOTHING MUST BE DONE WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE FUNDAMENTAL SECURITY OF SOUTH KOREA. IN THIS REGARD, THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENT WAS THE NECESSITY FOR CONTINUED CLOSE MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF U. S. FORCES. SECONDLY, THE ROKG MUST STILL RETAIN A FORMAL COMMITMENT TO ULTIMATE REUNIFICATION OF KOREA, RECOGNIZING THE REALITY OF A DIVIDED COUNTRY FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME IN WHICH TWO KOREAS SHOULD CO- EXIST PEACEFULLY.

3. KIM SAID THE PRESIDENT ALSO INSTRUCTED THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO PREPARE TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN SEOUL. ONCE THE KOREANS HAD ADVANCED THEIR PLANNING TO THE STAGE WHERE THEY HAD SOME FAIRLY DEFINITE IDEAS OF THE DIRECTION IN WHICH TO MOVE, THE PRESIDENT WISHED THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD RETURNED TO SEOUL AFTER HIS TRIP TO AUSTRALIA AND THERE WAS TO BE A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION FURTHER. SOMETIME AROUND THE END OF THIS WEEK, OR THE FIRST PART OF NEXT WEEK THE FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME TO OPEN SUCH DISCUSSIONS. ROKG THINKING SO FAR CENTERED AROUND SUCH THINGS AS THE NEED TO CHANGE POLICY WITH REGARD TO NORTH KOREAN PARTICIPATION IN UNITED NATION ORGANIZATIONS, ACCEPTANCE OF DUAL RECOGNITION BY THIRD COUNTRIES, AND EXAMINATION OF THE QUESTION OF UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE IN KOREA AND THE ANNUAL DEBATE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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4. I TOLD MR. KIM I WOULD BE PLEASED TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND OTHERS WHEN THEY WERE READY. I ASKED WHAT TIME FRAME WAS BEING CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF MAKING KNOWN THE SHIFTS IN POLICY? HE SAID THE LATEST THINKING OF THE PRESIDENT WAS TO MAKE IT KNOWN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SPECIFICALLY THEY

WERE NOW THINKING OF ANNOUNCING THEIR NEW POLICY SOMETIME IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY. THEY HAD EARLIER THOUGHT OF POSTPONING IT UNTIL LATER IN THE YEAR BUT NOW BELIEVED IT BETTER TO MOVE SOONER.

5. I SAID I WOULD BE WAITING TO HERE FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND ASKED IF I COULD DISCOUNT RECENT RUMOURS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER KIM WOULD BE RESIGNING IN THE WAKE OF WHO DEFEAT. KIM SAID THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD OFFERED TO RESIGN BUT THE PRESIDENT HAD REJECTED IT OUT OF HAND SAYING IT WAS NOT HIS FAULT AND TELLING HIM TO GET DOWN TO WORK ON THE NEW POLICY. (I CONSIDER THIS A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INDICATED MY SATISFACTION.)

6. I SAID I HOPED IN REVIEWING THEIR POLICY AND MAKING CHANGES, THE ROKG WOULD REMAIN AS FLEXIBLE AS POSSIBLE AND CONSIDER VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES AS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION RATHER THAN SETTLING ON ONE RIGID LINE. IN THIS WAY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US COULD BE MOST FRUITFUL AND ALLOW FOR EXPLORING ALL POSSIBILITIES. THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND, I SAID, THAT THE TIME HAD COME TO SHIFT FROM THE PREVIOUS POSITIONS AND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NEW SITUATION IN REALISTIC FASHION. THIS WAS CERTAINLY NECESSARY GIVEN THE SITUATION FACING US AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUT OTHER ASPECTS WERE ALSO INVOLVED. HE REPLIED THAT PRESIDENT PARK WAS PREPARED TO MAKE MAJOR CHANGES, KEEPING IN MIND ALWAYS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF MAINTAINING KOREA'S SECURITY.

7. ON MAY 22 FOREIGN MINISTER KIM YONG SHIK ASKED TO SEE ME. HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN A MEETING THE DAY BEFORE WITH PRESIDENT PARK, FOLLOWED BY DINNER,
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IN WHICH THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WAS THE MOVES TO BE TAKEN TO MODIFY KOREAN FOREIGN POLICY TO MEET THE REALITY OF CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF NORTH KOREA. HE HAS BEEN CHARGED BY THE PRESIDENT TO SPEED UP THE WORK OF PREPARING NEW KOREAN POSITIONS FOR DISCUSSION WITH ME. HE HOPED TO COMPLETE THIS PRELIMINARY WORK BY THE END OF THE WEEK. I SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATION, I COULD TELL HIM WASHINGTON BELIEVED HIS GOVERNMENT WAS REACTING WISELY AN
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8. HE SAID THEIR EARLIER PLANNING HAD BEEN BASED ON A SUCCESSFUL VOTE IN WHO BUT THEY WERE PREPARED TO GO AHEAD AND WERE STILL THINKING ALONG THE LINES HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH ME PREVIOUSLY (REF B). THE PRESIDENT WANTED TO MOVE SOONER IN MAKING KNOWN THEIR NEW POSITION AND WAS NOW THINKING OF DOING SO IN JULY. THEY WISHED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE AND WERE PREPARED TO GO EVEN FURTHER THAN HE HAD INDICATED TO ME EARLIER. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID THEY WERE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROPOSING SUCH THINGS AS IMMEDIATE MEMBERSHIP IN THE UNITED NATIONS FOR TWO KOREAS. EVEN IF NORTH KOREA REJECTED THIS IT WOULD BE WELL FOR THE SOUTH TO HAVE IT ON THE RECORD. THEY WERE ALSO THINKING OF WHAT COULD BE DONE WITH REGARD TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMAND. THEY BELIEVED IT WAS PREFERABLE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS COMMAND TO CONTINUE, BUT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO ACCEPT A CHANGE. JUST AS THE CONTINUATION OF UNCURK WAS NEGOTIABLE SO TOO COULD THERE BE CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATIONS IN THE UN PRESENCE AS A WHOLE. THEIR PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS TO MAINTAIN THE U. S. PRESENCE WHICH WAS NECESSARY FOR THEIR SECURITY.

9. HE SAID THE UN COMMAND PER SE WAS NOT NECESSARY IN THIS REGARD BUT IF IT WERE TO BE ABOLISHED QUESTIONS WOULD ARISE ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT TO WHICH THE UN COMMAND WAS SIGNATORY AND THE MILITARY ARMISTICE COMMISSION ESTABLISHED UNDER THE AGREEMENT. I
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REMARKED THAT THE QUESTIONS WENT EVEN FURTHER AND INVOLVED SUCH THINGS AS THE JOINT SECURITY AREA AND THE NEUTRAL NATIONS SUPERVISORY COMMISSION WHICH WERE ALSO PROVIDED FOR UNDER THE AGREEMENT.

10. HE SAID THE REASON THEY HAD BEGUN TO THINK ABOUT THE

FUTURE OF THE TOTAL UNITED NATIONS PRESENCE WAS IN ANTICIPATION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF INCLUDING IN THEIR NEW INITIATIVE THE CALL FOR DUAL ENTRANCE INTO THE UNITED NATIONS. THEY WERE CONSIDERING A COMPLETE MODIFICATION OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UN PRESENCE IN THE HOPE OF ELIMINATING THE NECESSITY FOR ANY SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE RAISED THESE MATTERS WITH ME AT THIS POINT ONLY IN A PERSONAL FASHION BECAUSE THEIR THINKING HAD NOT GONE VERY FAR. HE WISHED TO CONSIDER THE MATTER FURTHER AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME AT THE END OF THE WEEK OR THE EARLY PART OF NEXT WEEK. AT THAT TIME HE WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS THEIR VIEWS WITH ME OFFICIALLY.

11. I TOLD HIM THAT ON THE BASIS OF OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATION THE INTERESTED AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON WERE REVIEWING THE ISSUES. I HOPED TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS SOON. UNTIL THEN, I WOULD RESERVE COMMENT ON THE MATTERS HE HAD RAISED. MEANWHILE I HOPED THE DELIBERATIONS GOING ON WITHIN HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD MAINTAIN POSITIONS OF MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY WITH ALTERNATE POSSIBILITIES PRESENTED FOR DISCUSSION RATHER THAN IN RIGID DECISIONS ON THE COURSE TO FOLLOW. IN THAT MANNER WE COULD HAVE THE MOST FRUITFUL EXCHANGE. (I AM CONCERNED THAT ROKG WILL GET LOCKED INTO ONE LINE AND COMPLICATE OUR CONSULTATIONS.)

12. I ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IF THERE WAS ANY INTENTION TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH OTHER COUNTRIES, REMINDING HIM HE HAD EARLIER ASKED THAT THESE CONSULTATIONS BE STRICTLY BILATERAL WITH THE U. S. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS AT THIS STAGE. THEY WERE CONCERNED AT THE POSSIBILITY OF LEAKS. IN PARTICULAR, HE SAID, THEY WOULD NOT DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH THE JAPANESE
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BECAUSE IN THEIR EXPERIENCE NOTHING COULD BE KEPT SECRET AND IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS IF THESE MATTERS WERE TO GET INTO THE PRESS. HE ASKED AGAIN THAT WE NOT DISCUSS THESE PROPOSALS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES EITHER NOW OR AFTER OUR DETAILED CONSULTATIONS BEGIN. THEY WOULD INFORM OTHER COUNTRIES IN ADVANCE OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT BUT NOT SO LONG IN ADVANCE AS TO CREATE PROBLEMS.

13. AT THIS POINT IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT PARK HAS MADE A FUNDAMENTAL DECISION TO DEPART EXTENSIVELY FROM PREVIOUS POLICY. TO ANSWER QUESTION RAISED IN PARA 3 REF A, THIS NOT ONLY INVOLVES ACCEPTANCE OF TWO KOREA POLICY BUT HE IS OPEN TO SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE ON SUCH MATTERS AS UN PRESENCE.

INTERMINGLED WITH THIS FLEXIBILITY HOWEVER IS HIS CONCERN
FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF FULLEST POSSIBLE ASSURANCE OF
CONTINUED US PRESENCE AND BILATERAL COMMITMENT TO KOREA'S
SECURITY. HE IS MOVING QUICKLY TO DEVELOP ELEMENTS OF HIS NEW
POLICY AND IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH KEY FIGURES I HAVE ENCOURAGED
THEIR FLEXIBILITY. AS SOON AS WE HAVE DEFINITE ROKG OUTLINE
(WHICH SHOULD BE WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK) I WILL SUBMIT MY OWN
VIEWS ON THESE MATTERS IN DETAIL. MEANWHILE, IT IS APPARENT THAT
WASHINGTON REVIEW MENTIONED REFTEL " A " WILL NEED TO BE
ACCELERATED.
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